

## So What About The Holy Spirit?

### Part 9: What are Spiritual Gifts?

1 Corinthians 12-14 - [watch online](#)

#### Summary

What's the deal with spiritual gifts! What are they? How does it work? Like, does each Christian get their own Jesus-super-power? It might actually be better than that!

#### Message points

[00:45] Spiritual gifts are often misunderstood, misused, and controversial.

[02:28] The Holy Spirit plays a leading role in our relationship with God and each other.

[06:05] The Holy Spirit always points to Jesus.

[07:20] The Holy Spirit acts through individual Jesus Followers for the good of the community of Jesus Followers.

[10:22] The Holy Spirit is always giving each Jesus Follower a role to play in the body of Christ.

[12:00] Love within the community of Jesus Followers is the greatest gift of the Holy Spirit.

[13 :30] Spiritual gifts are given to help the Church in our Already but Not Yet existence.

[21:13 ] The Spirit doesn't have to work in the same way at every period of history nor in every culture or local church.

[22:00] We need to make room for diverse beliefs.

[22:36] We need to be open to diverse manifestations of the Spirit.

[25:15] The Holy Spirit empowers the people of God to experience and live the life of God now.

**This Week's Goal:** Let's cultivate an awareness of the Spirit. [23:30]

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

**Pray:** Holy Spirit, Show me how to play my role in living a life of love together. Lead me, guide me, and use me as you will.

#### Discussion questions

1. What stood out, intrigued, bothered, or confused you in this week's message? What are your personal thoughts on spiritual gifts?
2. How do your group's individual opinions differ? How can we disagree and be in the same family with this subject?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. What stands out? What personally challenges you?
4. What could it look like for you to be open to the Holy Spirit's leading and guiding this week and after?
5. How can your group pray for you?

---

#### Transcript

**IN:** Speaking in tongues... prophecy! Spiritual gifts! What are they? Are they like Christian super powers? Can I get one? Let's talk about it... together.

**WE:** 1 Cor. 12:1- Unaware/Ignorant

That's how I've felt for most of my life.

- Well I've tried to use the Force/I mean do spiritual gifts but nothing happened.
- Seems to be a common feeling

### **Spiritual gifts are often misunderstood, misused, and controversial.**

- Often see the two extremes...
- ALL IN... Weirddnesses... videos of drunk squiggly-wiggly squirrels
- COMPLETELY OVER... Maybe good for ancient Jesus Followers but we're modern now and have Bible so don't even raise hands during music might be getting a little wacky there...

Entire denominations (groups of churches) are formed based on how each one views/understands these things.

One of the reasons I'm so glad CCC leadership chose to not be a part of denom... there's room for a variety of thoughts/views on this.

- Disagree and still be in same family.

To show every view would take another 10 part series of its own... so I'm going to present an overview of what my study/research has brought me to while at times explaining other views.

Just because something is misused doesn't mean that thing is inherently wrong. Like a hammer.

Be open... be gracious... don't think you know it all... what I think we will discover is...

### **The Holy Spirit plays a leading role in our relationship with God and each other.**

So here we go...

**GOD:** Most in depth talk about these things is in 1 Cor

The early Church in Corinth. A lot of problems/division over a lot of different issues (including spiritual gifts)... So Paul writes them a series of letters telling them to shape up... we have one of those letters written around AD 53... 1 Cor.

But what Paul writes is not (and he never does write) a complete and systematic theology of Spiritual gifts.

Each of Paul's letters in NT, especially 1 Cor, is a letter addressing specific issues in specific local community. It seems the Corinthians were experiencing the Holy Spirit manifest himself in many ways in their gatherings but they were getting carried away and focusing too much on the more "extravagant/outward" manifestations (speaking in tongues, etc.) and even saying this person's gift is more important/better than this other person's.

So Paul's main point in this is to explain to them the importance of Diversity with unity... but in this we can glean some insight and answer some questions we have about spiritual gifts...

Let's start with **what are Spiritual gifts?**

**1 Cor. 12:1.** 1st- The phrase “spiritual gifts” isn’t actually what Paul said... no where in BW’s

- Spirituals/Spiritual things/Things the Holy Spirit does...
- Best word... manifestations of the Spirit... things the Spirit does through Jesus Followers.
- These manifestations are things that are activated by and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

**12:2-3** Just as you were influenced by those false idols... now you are being influenced by Holy Spirit.

Speaking in tongues, types of prophecy... was nothing new in the ancient world...

- Praying in an unintelligible language and being in a kind of trance was a common form of prayer in the Grk/Rom religions.

So most likely what Paul is saying... when you used to be swept away by worshiping idols, there were a lot of spiritual empowered people/people in touch w/ spiritual powers that were real and would influence you...

You were influenced by spiritual powers but not the power of the HS of God... you are experiencing something different now.

When someone is spiritually influenced... if it is the HS they will never curse Jesus/or use his name as a curse on others (May Zeus curse you), and if it isn’t the HS they won’t say Jesus is Lord b/c when someone is truly influenced by the HS it will always point to Jesus...

**The Holy Spirit always points to Jesus.**

**V. 4-6** Remember “The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to give life to a new people who will show the world the life Jesus offers.”

A taste of what humanity will be with when everything is renewed in and through Jesus.

And these manifestations are part of the future breaking into our lives now.

God helping/encouraging/leading his new people now in a world that is not yet remade.

And he does this in a variety of ways... But they all come from the same God.

**Why does the HS give these manifestations?**

**V. 7** Why are the manifestations given? For each other. For the common good.

**The Holy Spirit acts through individual Jesus Followers for the good of the community of Jesus Followers**

Then Paul goes on to **list some of the ways** the Spirit has manifested himself through the church at Corinth... **v. 8-10**

Here we have one of the main lists of different gifts... he expands on this list a little later. There is another list in Romans 12... and a few other manifestations mentioned in the NT.

**One view** is when someone becomes a Jesus Follower, when the HS comes into them/seals/baptizes them as God's, they are given their own specific gift for life.

- Some have the gift of tongues while another person has the gift of hospitality and so forth
- Kind of like the idea that each JF has their own Jesus super power
  - Like on the Incredibles where this guy has super strength, this lady is elasticity, this is the ice guy.
  - Go to church gathering... "where is my super suit?"
- Maybe you've taken a spiritual gifts test? It comes from this idea.
- Interestingly, I always got the one I wanted...

I'm not going to say this is definitely an incorrect view... but from what I see, doesn't seem this is what Paul is getting at...

1st... No list is exactly the same... and if Paul was writing to these people telling them what the Spirit does you would think he would be thorough.

I think it's more like when Paul lists the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians... these are some examples of the HS's manifestations.

**The point of this list and the next one is *not* to lay out a systematic organized list of how all this works and be able to pick from the list and identify which one you are...**

In the context of the passage, the **point** is *to show that there are a variety of gifts/ministries/and ways the HS manifests himself in the local church body.*

As Paul goes on he explains... Church is one body many parts and no one part is better than the others and everyone is needed for the health/good of the whole body.

It seems most likely that Paul is saying the HS works in a variety of ways and over the course of a lifetime the HS could use the same person in a variety of ways... however he wants in whatever way is best for the community.

**The HS is always giving each JF a role to play in the body of Christ.**

We see this in what he says in **12:27-30**

Paul describes different ministries, roles and manifestations and says **they are all part** of a beautiful and diverse group of JF's united in one body.

So he says... these are great and given by the HS but there's a better gift you **MUST** have...

**12:31, 13:1-3 Love within the community of JF's is the greatest gift of the HS.** WHY? It's the only one that lasts *forever.*

**13:8-13** Now some take this passage to support the view of *Cessationism*, which means some manifestations (tongues/miracles/healing/etc.) were only for the early church while it was being created and God needed to prove that this was the real deal. But now that we have the Bible these gifts have died out.

Again I'm not going to outright say that's incorrect, but it doesn't seem that is what Paul is saying here.

He is saying all of these manifestations are great... but they are for our time now in the Not Yet.

**Spiritual gifts are given to help the Church in our Already but Not Yet existence.**

**They help JF's live the life of God as the people of God in the between time we are in...** living in the KoG as the first fruits before all of creation is remade.

One day we won't need to pray in tongues b/c we will see the face of God, we won't need God to speak to us through prophecy b/c we will already know him perfectly.

But what will last is the love we are a part of right now.

Paul goes on... **14:1-3**

"Follow the way of love" ... but at the same time desire the Spirit to manifest himself w/ you (for the good of each other)... especially through prophecy which is better than tongues.

HUH?

Ok here we go... **Prophecy and Speaking in Tongues.** I'm going to try to summarize the rest of Chpt 14...

Speaking in tongues... 2 types.

1st the HS allowing people to speak in different human languages like on Pentecost... God breaking down cultural/language barriers to create his new people from all peoples. Not what Paul is talking about here.

2nd is speaking in languages no one knows... often called praying in tongues (again not an idea that was unique to Xians at the time).

Normally when we pray, our mind is engaged and we are thinking about what we are going to say next and string together coherent words into thoughts right?

- This is praying w/ your spirit apart from your mind.

It's not directed at other people only to God on a purely emotional level, between your subconscious and God.

Some say it's the HS praying through you...

You do it w/o letting your mind and mouth form meaningful language.

- You let your mouth release what you are feeling while your mind (though not detached) is at rest

We actually do something similar all the time... get a cramp in your calf... Eye--eeee---oooo---phooo---sname.

- Your mind doesn't know what you're saying... you are saying whatever expresses how you are feeling.
- But it's not a trance-like state... the speaker isn't ecstatic or out of control (**14:27-28**). One at a time; interpreted, or private.

Though I've never experienced it... From my discussions with people and my study it is a very meaningful way to connect w/ Jesus and something that the Spirit gifts many JF's

And Paul says he does it and encourages it in its proper place... usually private prayer time... and if you must do it in your public gathering you need to have someone who can translate it... WHY?

B/c praying in tongues doesn't do anybody else any good if they don't know what you're saying.

What is the point of most of the gifts? The good of everyone.

So he says... tongues are great but you know what's even better? Prophecy!! "Oh yeah! Telling the future!!"- Nope.

Prophecy- people who are in control of themselves but are speaking to God's people under the influence of the HS.

Using your mind that has been renewed by the HS, has been reflecting on Scripture and filled w/ songs of Jesus to, when felt led by the HS, give a spontaneous and understandable encouragement or challenge to those gathered.

- Usually directed to the whole community... sometimes individuals but w/in the context of the community.

And apparently this is a gift that is available to everyone since Paul tells all the Corinthians to eagerly desire it.

Why? B/c unlike speaking in tongues... everyone can understand what is being said, and it edifies, builds, and encourages everyone.

And these people needed some building up and guidance.

He says **14:12b**.

Now some people say what I'm doing is prophecy... study scripture, pray and ask God what he wants me to say, allow the HS to influence as I write... and it may be... but again doesn't seem to be exactly what Paul is talking about...

I'm more teaching... so that we can understand the Apostles' teaching (which might have actually been prophecy in it's own way) and be able to discern...

### **Why do we need to discern...?**

Well it seems like this prophecy stuff could really be abused and used to manipulate people... It definitely could be, and has been and still is...

Which is why Paul says (here/other letters) if someone says they have a word from God the others don't just accept it, they test it to discern if it is really from God and what they should do about it...

- Is what is said pointing to Jesus? Or someone's personal point of view, agenda, or to get something for themselves
- Does this line up w/ the heart of God as revealed in Scripture by Jesus' appointed spokespeople- Apostles?
- Does it point to love?

**YOU:** So it is clear that in their gatherings the first JF's experienced some amazing manifestations of the HS. Paul never tries to get them to stop but says it all must be done/viewed properly.

The point was to build up the church as they lived as the people of God to show the world the love of God.

**So...** Does this mean that if our lives/churches don't look like the early first century churches we are doing something wrong?

- If we aren't seeing healings every other week and whatnot we don't have the HS?

No. Often we read Acts and see miracle after miracle and forget that it is describing what the HS did over decades... in many diverse places... Luke recording the Greatest Hits of the HS.

Paul is writing to specific churches not always saying what every church should look like.

**The Spirit doesn't have to work in the same way at every period of history nor in every culture or local church.**

I've been with Jesus for decades and can only count a few things I've experienced... not even once a year.

- Never spoken in tongues (kind of scares me)

But just b/c you haven't spoken in tongues doesn't mean the Spirit hasn't manifested himself to/through you...

Has your love grown? That is the most important. Has God loved others through your actions! MIRACLE!

**So what do we do about this? We need to make room for diverse beliefs**

- Some of you might say for the most part...gifts are done... fine
- Others might say they aren't... fine
- Question: Do you love Jesus? Then love each other.
- Love is the greatest gift of the HS, and it never goes away

Now... I'm not trying to push anyone... but if you're more on the "I'm not sure" side...

I'm going to say- **We need to be open to diverse manifestations of the Spirit.**

If there is a God... what is actually impossible? **NT Wright:** God does all sorts of odd things.

Who are we to tell God what we can or can't do? Why would we want to put God in a box?

I personally believe God gifts and uses people today just as he always has. He can do whatever he wants.

And the guidance Paul gives here should always guide our practice and experience with such things.

So, here's my challenge to us...

- Let's focus on the greatest gift of love
- While being open to the HS loving us/building us up together any way he sees fit.

**Goal:** As Tim Mackie said... **Let's cultivate an awareness of the Spirit.**

Let's be wise... and at same time be open to the Spirit of God/Breath/*Ruach*/Wind blowing wherever/however he chooses.

What will this look like for CCC... I don't know.

Maybe we need to make room in our gatherings for someone to share what God has put on their heart?

It for sure means we need to be seriously committed to loving each other. Despite and b/c of our uniqueness.

Nothing will show the fact that we are God's people more than the HS Spirit empowering us to love each other.

So don't resist this love.

- Forgive... accept apologies... let go of annoyances/spats/division.
- ASSUME THE BEST in love
- Our goal is the same as Paul's: Unity w/ diversity.

**Read:** 1 Cor. 13:4-7

**Pray:** Holy Spirit, show me how to play my role in living a life of love together. Lead me, guide me, and use me as you will.

**WE:** God does all sorts of odd things.

Let's not put God in a box... let us cultivate an awareness of the Holy Spirit in our individual lives and in our life as the people of God.

God wants to use each of us together to show the world the life he has offered through Jesus.

**The Holy Spirit empowers the people of God to experience and live the life of God now.**